



FEMA

EMERGENCY MANAGER FINDS NEW USE FOR CABLE AND CELL PHONES

Seguin, TX - Fearing that residents along the Guadalupe River were not receiving flood warnings in a timely manner, Seguin County's emergency management coordinator, Dan Kinsey, developed and piloted an emergency callout system.

"Here we could very easily have a situation where we would have a flash flood. If 20-30 percent of your population doesn't have the traditional home phone, you need to find a way to warn them," said Kinsey.

He took advantage of an automated telephone notification system the county has purchased in 2003. It was set to place calls by zones. "We already had everything in place," Kinsey said. "It's a great tool with a lot of possibilities. It was just a matter of creating a database, collecting the information and getting it into the system."

Kinsey continued, "That database could not just rely on traditional land-line telephone numbers, however. There are so many people using cable phones and cell phones nowadays. Your normal land-line database just doesn't cover enough people."

He drafted an Emergency Callout System Voluntary Registration form. Participants are required to list the location of their waterfront property, two phone numbers (designating whether they are land-lines, cell phones or cable/internet phones), and an email address.

Residents are asked to update their numbers in writing, or to notify the Office of Emergency Management if they move out of the flood hazard zone.

However, being able to notify residents is only half of the system. The other half is being able to know when to notify them. Kinsey monitors water flows measured by the Guadalupe River Authority at its hydro-electric dams. Based on those numbers, he can predict when flooding is imminent.

While all emergencies cannot be avoided, Kinsey tries to prevent some and manage others in ways that minimize their impact.



Guadalupe County,
Texas



Quick Facts

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$30,000.00 (Estimated)

Primary Activity/Project:

Warning Systems

Primary Funding:

State sources